



August 7, 2015

Statement from Speaker LoRenzo Bates regarding water contamination

The Office of the Speaker is in contact with tribal, county, and state officials to track the ongoing contamination caused by the acidic water spill in the Animas River in Colorado. San Juan County officials in New Mexico have notified our office that the contamination resulting from the spill on Wednesday morning in Silverton, CO will reach communities along the San Juan River by this evening.

The Navajo Nation has several chapters that are located near the San Juan River in New Mexico, and I remain in contact with those chapters to ensure that our community members are aware and remain informed as the contamination moves through the area.

Although the U.S. EPA continues to state that the contamination does not pose detrimental threats, I strongly urge nearby chapters and our people who reside near the San Juan River to refrain from using the water for any purposes until a thorough evaluation is completed.

In regards to Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI), officials with NAPI have stated that the spill will not adversely impact Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP) water delivery because NIIP diverts water directly out of Navajo Reservoir which does not receive any water from the Animas River.

Lastly, I thank my Council colleagues for their concerns and efforts in facilitating communication between chapters and other officials to caution our people and communities. The Office of the Speaker remains engaged and updated as the situation evolves.

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LoRenzo Bates, Speaker
23rd Navajo Nation Council